

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SUB-COMMITTEE

DATE: JANUARY 7, 2015

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS TAYLOR
MONROE
SEEBER
GIRARD

OTHERS PRESENT:

KEVIN GERAGHTY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS BROCK

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR VANSELOW

MERLINO
GRETCHEN STEFFAN, COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR
CHARLENE DiRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Taylor called the meeting of the Performance Evaluation Sub-Committee to order at 10:03 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Girard, seconded by Mr. Monroe and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Copies of the agenda were distributed to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Taylor announced that unlike the previous meetings of this Committee, this meeting would be held in an open session. He asked Paul Dusek, County Administrator, and Gretchen Steffan, County Human Resources Director, if they had any comments for the Committee.

Mr. Dusek advised the purpose of the Performance Evaluation Sub-Committee was to establish a performance evaluation form for the County Administrator and to eventually establish performance evaluation forms for Department Heads and non-union employees. As the County Administrator, Mr. Dusek stated he welcomed and supported this effort. He informed the Committee had previously reviewed his work performance and goal expectations for 2015. He noted the list of goals had been shared with the Supervisors and Ms. Steffan and an email detailing those goals was included in the agenda packet; *a copy of the email is on file with the minutes.* He commented he felt it was important to share the list of goals with Ms. Steffan because they were trying to develop performance evaluation forms which directly related to the goals. Mr. Dusek informed he had obtained performance evaluation forms from other Counties which were used in the evaluation of their County Administrators and he had forwarded these forms to Ms. Steffan, as well. He opined the County was fortunate to have Ms. Steffan's assistance in this matter as she had a history of working as a human resources consultant and he felt her background would be useful to this process.

Ms. Steffan distributed the following handouts to the Committee members; *copies of which are on file with the minutes:*

- Gretchen's Notes, January 7, 2015, Performance Evaluation Sub-Committee;
- Exhibit A - Genesee County Legislature, County Manager Performance Evaluation Form 2014;
- Exhibit B - County Manager Self Evaluation Form;
- Exhibit C - County Administrator, Evaluation Checklist; and
- Exhibit D - Draft Warren County Performance Evaluation Form.

Ms. Seeber commented this information had not been provided to the Committee members prior to the Meeting. Mr. Taylor responded he had intended to email the information on the previous day

but had been unable to because he did not have everyone's email addresses. Ms. Steffan apologized and noted she had been unable to email the handouts prior to the Committee Meeting because she had just completed them that morning. Ms. Seeber asked if the handouts could be emailed to the entire Board of Supervisors following the Meeting and Ms. Steffan replied affirmatively.

Ms. Steffan stated she and Mr. Dusek had been tasked with the following by the Committee: review the performance elements (measurable goals); incorporate the County Administrator's goals and objectives; re-word the performance elements as needed; evaluate proposed evaluation forms and discuss with the Committee members; and develop a consistent format for all performance evaluation forms. Based on the list of tasks, Ms. Steffan said she wanted to provide the Committee members with some background on performance management and the context of performance management within strategic planning. She noted Chairman Geraghty had discussed the importance of strategic planning during the January 5, 2015 Organization Meeting. She advised strategic planning was a finite process which involved the following aspects: vision; mission; tactical plans; operational plans; and individual performance expectations.

Ms. Steffan explained that performance evaluations were really the end of the strategic planning process. She added the employees performance should be evaluated annually and the evaluation should include expectations and goals for the coming year. She commented employee performance was generally evaluated on an incremental basis (monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, annually). She mentioned the performance manager would have regular and ongoing communications with employees pertaining to their performance. The annual performance evaluation, she continued, should include a summary of all of these previous discussions with the employee. She presented the example of a performance evaluation session scheduled for one hour and said the first 15 minutes should be a summary of previous performance conversations and accomplishments of the year and the remaining 45 minutes should be a discussion on the goals and expectations for the coming year.

Ms. Steffan stated strategic planning usually started with the Board of Directors or in the case of Warren County, the Board of Supervisors, who would discuss the broad general direction that they wanted to take the County in the future (vision). She noted the Board would decide the County's mission or purpose and she pointed out as a County government, Warren County had a mission of service. She commented the County had 33 Departments and each one had a definitive job to complete within the context of the organization. The next step, Ms. Steffan continued, was the tactical planning process which was generally a 2 to 3 year plan. She commented the operational plans were the steps necessary to meet the County's greater goal. Once these first four steps were completed, she said, then the individual performance expectations were determined and evaluated. She mentioned once the individual performance expectations were determined then each employee would know exactly what was expected of them on a daily basis.

Mr. Taylor mentioned it seemed based on the presentation that the Performance Evaluation Sub-Committee had approached their task backwards and Ms. Steffan agreed. Mr. Taylor asked if the Committee should be undergoing the strategic planning process and Ms. Steffan replied that was normally the way it was completed within an organization. Ms. Steffan commented this would be a large process because Warren County had almost 1,000 employees.

Chairman Geraghty questioned whether or not the County had already established a vision and Mr. Dusek replied in the negative. Mr. Dusek mentioned Warren County had not undergone the type of process described by Ms. Steffan. He stated that although this was a lengthy process, they would discuss a way to "jump start" the process for 2015. He said they would be able to look at the County's performance goals in 2015 and as suggested by Chairman Geraghty at the January 5, 2015 Organization Meeting, engage in strategic planning for the future. Chairman Geraghty mentioned

the County's vision and mission had been discussed but had never been put into writing. He stated Warren County did not make a product, they provided services. A brief discussion ensued.

Ms. Steffan stated the strategic planning process was important and fit within the performance management process. She advised each County position had a job description which was a broad description of what was expected but the performance evaluations would allow the County to more specifically identify what they were looking for from each employee during the performance period. She said performance management encompassed the following aspects: recruitment and selection; placement of orientation; delegation and coaching; performance evaluation and feedback; and rewards.

Ms. Steffan explained when employees were recruited to employment with Warren County, the expectations were communicated from the first point of contact, such as an advertisement in the newspaper or a job posting. She mentioned the employees were selected based on their qualifications for the vacant position. She said upon hiring, the employees were oriented and provided with tools and technologies necessary to deliver on the performance expected of them. Ms. Steffan stated once an employee had undergone the first two stages, their supervisor would begin to delegate work to them so they could grow and become an integral part of the operation. She commented the supervisor would also coach the employees to higher levels of performance. She stated part of being a manager in any organization was making sure the employees were continually growing and obtaining more skills. She indicated there had been previous discussions in the Personnel Committee pertaining to the need to replace employees who had retired or resigned. She advised if performance was not managed appropriately, the County's employees would not be ready to assume vacated positions. Ms. Steffan commented the performance evaluation and feedback was the fourth phase of performance management. She added the feedback given to the employees was based on the predetermined expectations. She noted every year an employee was with the County, they should be increasing their skills. She commented the final phase of the performance management process was the reward systems which included salary increases and the opportunity to be promoted.

Mr. Taylor asked the Committee members if they agreed that the strategic planning process was important and the consensus was affirmative. Ms. Seeber voiced her confusion and pointed out that the charge of the Performance Evaluation Sub-Committee was specifically to review the goals for the County Administrator. She commented the Committee had met several times during the busy holiday season and she felt they had developed some good performance elements for the position. She mentioned these elements had been based on information derived from the New York State Department of Justice, other Counties and other examples throughout the Country. She said the email included in the agenda packet was not the one she had sent to Ms. Steffan and Mr. Dusek. Ms. Seeber stated she thought the purpose of the email had been to look at the performance elements and modify them and she felt the feedback being presented today was that these were not viable performance elements. She said it seemed they were being told to go back to the beginning and complete the strategic planning. Mr. Dusek informed that Ms. Steffan had wanted to give a presentation which would put the performance evaluation process into context. He said the mission of the Performance Evaluation Sub-Committee had not changed. He commented the next few steps of the process would show that he and Ms. Steffan had been fully responsive to the requests of the Committee. He advised that by the end of the meeting, the Committee could decide on a performance evaluation form which would be suitable for their purposes. Ms. Seeber asked if the performance evaluation form would include the measurable goals which had been determined by the Committee and Mr. Dusek replied affirmatively.

Mr. Brock said he had been through a similar process before and understood the information being presented. He commented he had always found the most enthusiastic people were the ones that had

been involved in developing the goals of the organization. He stated the majority of County employees were service oriented and not driven by profit or money. He advised the most dedicated people he had ever met were firemen, police and emergency medical services employees. He opined the County would lose something if the employees were not involved with the strategic planning process. He said he felt the County needed to determine a way to involve the employees in the process, as well as the Supervisors. Ms. Steffan responded the number of employees/Supervisors involved in the strategic planning process was usually an organizational decision. She said the Department Heads would gather information from their employees to be brought up through the chain of command and usually all employees felt their voices had been heard.

Ms. Steffan informed usually within an organization, the executive evaluations were very different from the other employees due to the complexity of their responsibilities. She noted evaluation approaches included complexity or simplicity and there were many articles which stated the simplicity evaluations were more effective. In the case of executives, she continued, a narrative was usually more effective than a checked box form. She noted she had drafted a Warren County Performance Evaluation Form which would be sufficient for most employees but would not be effective for an executive. Ms. Steffan said an executive was usually evaluated by an executive committee of the board and she suggested the Executive Committee for Warren County include: the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors; the Budget Officer; the Chairman of the Personnel Committee; and the Chairman of the Supervisory Committee, which for the County Administrator position would be the Support Services Committee. Mr. Taylor agreed executive positions should be evaluated differently than other positions; however, he continued, when the evaluation was completed it would most likely be measured on a scale, for example a scale of 1 to 5. He said at some point it would be necessary to take the narrative and rate it and he asked the suggestion for doing so. Ms. Steffan replied she had several forms which she would discuss which could be used for evaluating the County Administrator. She explained Mr. Dusek had recommended some forms which she had reviewed and had identified recommendations based on these forms.

Ms. Steffan commented that self evaluations were integral to the performance evaluation process. She added when it came to the performance of the County Administrator there would be no better person to track his accomplishments than Mr. Dusek. She noted one of the forms included in the handouts was the County Manager Self Evaluation Form, marked as Exhibit B. She advised one of her tasks had been to review the goals and she noted 12 goals were aggressive and for this number she would suggest they be two year goals. For most organizations, she continued, there were 5 or 6 key goals that they wanted accomplished. She said the goals would need a little more work and the next step would be for Mr. Dusek to review and set due dates for them. She advised the goals were fairly broad and would need to be made more specific.

Ms. Steffan stated she had reviewed the goals and performance elements submitted in order to place them into categories. Pertaining to the performance elements listed as "Measurable Goals" on the email included in the agenda packet, she advised the following:

- 1) *Assist the Board of Supervisors by identifying and implementing Countywide priorities and linking these priorities to department and program operations in a timely and professional manner; outlines issues effectively and provides meaningful policy alternatives; responsive to inquiries from Supervisors* - She stated this goal fell into the category of "planning" but she did not feel this was a measurable goal;
- 2) *Assist departments and programs in evaluating the quality of their services and make continuous improvements to service delivery; encourages open communications between elected officials and staff; responsible for supervision of department heads* - She said this goal fell under the category of "leadership and supervision" but she was unsure how it could be measured in finite terms;

- 3) *Inform the budget process to help allocate resources based on the highest priorities; responsible for County organizational compliance with Federal and State laws, rules, grant requirements and accepted best practices* - She advised this goal fell into the category of "compliance" and was more easily measured;
- 4) *Communicate the results and outcomes of our services to all members of the Board of Supervisors and to the community; open and accessible to the public; treats public, elected officials and staff with respect and shows a willingness to listen and consider their input* - She commented this goal fell into the category of "communication" but she was unsure how it would be measured without a more definitive explanation; and
- 5) *Is a "self-starter", demonstrates creativity, willing to initiate projects; visionary; all other duties as assigned* - She pointed out this goal fell into the category of "initiative" but she felt it would also be difficult to measure without more finite definition.

Ms. Steffan informed that in their performance evaluations it was important that employees understand what they needed to accomplish and that was why the measurability was an important aspect. She commented the performance elements and goals were not sufficiently defined to allow her to place them into the correct categories. She reiterated the measurement of the goals was an important factor and there was incongruence between the performance elements and the goals.

Pertaining to the timing of performance evaluations, Ms. Steffan recommended the best time to complete Department Head evaluations would be during the budget process. She said the Department Heads would prepare and present their annual budgets for submission and this was an ideal time for them to take a retrospective look at what they were supposed to have accomplished during the year. She opined this was a great time to evaluate the Department Heads performance because the discussions were already happening. She noted this would also eliminate the need to schedule an additional round of meetings and add another project to the year. Mr. Taylor asked if Mr. Dusek had any comments about completing the Department Head performance evaluations during the budget process and Mr. Dusek replied it would be the ideal time because they were already having extensive conversations with Department Heads at that time. A discussion ensued pertaining to the possibility of completing Department Head performance evaluations during the budget process.

Pertaining to his goals for each year, Mr. Dusek commented he operated on a calendar year and when he was finishing the year he looked back on the jobs and duties he had not completed in order to clean up the year and set his future expectations. Ms. Seeber pointed out Ms. Steffan had indicated the performance elements were not congruent with the goals and she opined this was because they were not written in conjunction. She said there would need to be a lot more communication with the Board members to decide how to measure these goals.

Chairman Geraghty said this process was moving along fairly quickly and he asked how many employees would receive performance evaluations in 2015. He questioned if the plan for 2015 was just to complete a performance evaluation for the County Administrator or if the next level of employees, the Department Heads, would also be completed. He cautioned against pushing the process along too quickly and advised that failing at the first level would cause the whole system to fail. He commented there were approximately 200 non-union employees who would require performance evaluations and he suggested the Committee take "baby steps" in initiating this process. He stated the County Administrator's performance evaluation should be decided upon and completed first and then the next level of performance evaluations should be decided. Chairman Geraghty opined the initiation of a performance evaluation system was a big change to Warren County. He agreed that Department Heads tended to request salary increases for their staff members during the budget process. He noted a lot of the non-union salaries were currently decided

based on the marketplace which could hinder valuable employees. He reiterated the initiation should be completed in steps and doing too much at once would cause the system to fail. Mr. Dusek agreed and he said he would not suggest that all non-union employees be evaluated during 2015. A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Dusek explained that in a very raw form, the County had completed some of the strategic planning process. He noted the goals for the County Administrator had been set and some valid proposed performance evaluation forms had been presented. He pointed out one of the issues with measuring the goals for the County Administrator position was that the entire performance evaluation system was not currently in place. Most Counties, he continued, started with the strategic plan and had a spreadsheet listing what position took care of which duties. He explained that some of the County Administrator's goals were actually delegations to Departments and involved follow up on the part of the County Administrator. He said the only way to measure those goals would be to map out the delegation process. He stated that the performance evaluation system was in the rough stages but the goals and the proposed forms could be used to accomplish the intent of the Board of Supervisors and the mission of the Performance Evaluation Sub-Committee. He noted it would be a one to two year process to establish the entire performance evaluation system. He suggested completing his performance evaluation and then beginning work on the strategic plan. Once the strategic plan was in place, he continued, all of the other steps would follow.

Mr. Monroe questioned how to get to a point that the goals would be precisely measurable. Pertaining to the 5 Measurable Goals listed in the email, he said he would have no issue with providing his subjective opinion on Mr. Dusek's performance of each goal. Mr. Taylor agreed and mentioned the ratings on evaluations were subjective based on the person completing it. Ms. Seeber said her understanding of the Committee's goal following the last meeting was to take the measurable goals that were established and develop a form in order to start the performance evaluation process. She added she had anticipated presenting the performance evaluation form to the Board of Supervisors at the February 20, 2015 Board Meeting. She stated she had also anticipated this Committee would meet quarterly to complete semi-annual and annual reviews which would be used as a starting point to develop the Department Head and employee performance evaluation system. Based on today's meeting, Ms. Seeber said she felt like the Committee was taking steps backwards. Mr. Dusek disagreed and stated they would review the proposed performance evaluation forms which would provide further explanation. Ms. Seeber questioned where the performance elements (measurable goals) were reflected and Mr. Dusek responded they had been incorporated into the performance evaluation forms. He explained Exhibit A was the Genesee County Legislature, County Manager Performance Evaluation Form; Exhibit B was the County Manager Self Evaluation Form; and Exhibit C was the County Administrator Evaluation Checklist. He further explained that Exhibit A would be completed by the Executive Committee; Exhibit B would be completed by himself; and Exhibit C would be completed by each member of the Board of Supervisors.

Ms. Steffan stated she had reviewed several forms and her recommendation was that Exhibit A be used for the performance evaluation of the County Administrator. She noted this form did not use a numerical rating system but instead presented the choices of: exceeds standards; meets standards; and fails to meet standards. She commented that Exhibit B would be completed by Mr. Dusek and would assist the Executive Committee in the completion of Exhibit A. She noted Exhibit B would allow Mr. Dusek to evaluate his own performance based on the goals that had been set for him and accepted by the Board of Supervisors. Exhibit C, she continued, presented the opportunity for each member of the Board of Supervisors to provide input about their perspective of Mr. Dusek's performance. For Exhibit C, Ms. Steffan pointed out she had recommended replacing the 1 to 5

rating scale with a 1 to 3 rating scale. Ms. Seeber questioned where the 5 measurable goals were represented within the forms and Mr. Dusek responded the measurable goals were spread among the items listed on the evaluation forms. He stated the 5 goals could not be measured as they were and required breaking down in order to be measured appropriately. He indicated that each of the 5 measurable goals was reflected within the 12 criteria listed on the proposed Performance Evaluation Form. Mr. Taylor stated that he believed Ms. Seeber had expected to see a proposed County Administrator Performance Evaluation Form which included all of the goals discussed at the previous meetings and Ms. Seeber agreed and noted that the email had requested the form be presented at this meeting. She opined the format of the documents presented today was completely different than what had been discussed.

Chairman Geraghty suggested Ms. Seeber draft a proposed Performance Evaluation Form with a ratings system and send it to the Committee members. Ms. Seeber countered that a lot of work and research had been completed over the last 6 weeks in order to develop the 5 measurable goals and she felt the next step was to modify them. Chairman Geraghty asked if the Committee was requesting Mr. Dusek and Ms. Steffan to draft the form or if the Committee intended to do so and Ms. Seeber replied that Mr. Dusek and Ms. Steffan were supposed to draft the form based on the information provided. Mr. Dusek stated the forms presented, Exhibits A, B and C, were the forms that he and Ms. Steffan were suggesting the Committee use for his performance evaluation. A discussion ensued.

Mr. Taylor asked if Mr. Girard had any comments and Mr. Girard indicated that he was a member of the Committee but the concept of performance evaluations was very foreign to him. He said that every day he woke up and evaluated everyone he met and he formed opinions and operated accordingly. During his tenure on the Board of Supervisors, Mr. Girard commented, he had worked with four different County Administrators and several different Supervisors. He said his history with the County lent to the way he did things and Ms. Steffan did not yet have that historical knowledge. He noted he had seen operational aspects of how the County conducted business and he was not always in agreement. He indicated the evolution of the County had led to the establishment of the Human Resources Department. Mr. Girard stated the Board of Supervisors paid close attention to the work completed by the County Administrator and were very vocal with their opinions. He said he understood what Ms. Seeber's intention was and he noted that salary increases had been requested and a justification for this was desired.

Mr. Girard informed that he had voted in opposition to the salary increase for the County Administrator. He indicated this had nothing to do with Mr. Dusek's performance or communication skills but was a decision based on the history of Warren County which included difficult union negotiations and the elimination of positions. He advised although the County had worked through that difficult financial situation, he did not think it was the appropriate time to reward Mr. Dusek for the hard work he had accomplished even though the salary increase was deserved. He expressed the purpose of the performance evaluations was to ensure future salary increases were justified; however, he continued, even if they were justified he would probably vote in opposition again, due to the history of the County. He pointed out that Mr. Dusek could most likely earn a higher salary in the private sector but he chose to work for Warren County. Mr. Girard stated he was generally supportive of the work completed by Mr. Dusek and he felt Mr. Dusek understood his reasons for voting in opposition of the salary increase.

Mr. Monroe said many of these decisions were subjective and he did not believe there was a possibility of accomplishing a precise evaluation. He mentioned if it met Ms. Seeber's concerns to incorporate the 5 measurable goals into a performance evaluation form, then the specifics would be dealt with and there would be more general elements, as well. Mr. Girard opined this was a good opportunity to look at where the County wanted to be collectively as opposed to merely a one year

period. He indicated when he had first assumed a position on the Board of Supervisors, the emphasis had been to extend the tourism season with a proposed convention center. He noted it did not happen but the attempt was made; however, he continued, since then he had not really seen any forward vision for the Board. He reiterated this was an opportunity to start looking forward.

Mr. Taylor asked Ms. Seeber if she would draft a form that would address her concerns and he requested the Committee members to review the proposed performance evaluation forms that were presented today to determine if they had any merit. He stated when Chairman Geraghty established the Performance Evaluation Sub-Committee the intention had been to develop measurable goals for the County Administrator. He said that had been accomplished and now the Committee was discussing how those goals should be rated. Ms. Seeber responded that she would draft a proposed form but she voiced her concern about the possibility of the form not being acceptable to the Committee members making it necessary to go back to the beginning and start over. It was the consensus of the Committee to schedule the next Performance Evaluation Sub-Committee Meeting after the January 16, 2015 Board Meeting.

As there was no further business to come before the Performance Evaluation Sub-Committee, on motion made by Mr. Girard and seconded by Mr. Monroe, Mr. Taylor adjourned the meeting at 11:21 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist